

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for roll coating stents, comprising the steps of:
placing a stent on a stent holder located on a conveyer;
rotating the stent holder while the conveyer moves the stent through a stent coater;
and
applying a coating to the rotating stent as it passes through the stent coater.
2. The method of roll coating stents of claim 1, wherein the conveyer is an endless belt.
3. A method for roll coating stents, comprising the steps of:
placing a plurality of stents on a plurality of stent holders located on a conveyer;
rotating the stent holders while the conveyer moves the stents through a stent coater;
and
applying a coating to the rotating stents while passing through the stent coater.
4. The method of roll coating stents of claim 3, wherein one of the plurality of stents is placed on each of the plurality of stent holders.
5. The method of roll coating stents of claim 4, wherein the conveyer is an endless belt, and the endless belt is moving as the plurality of stents is placed on the plurality of stent holders.
6. The method of roll coating stents of claim 5, wherein the stent coater includes a coating sprayer, and the conveyer moves the plurality of stents through a coating spray released from the coating sprayer.
7. The method of roll coating stents of claim 5, wherein the stent coater includes a coating bath, and the conveyer moves the plurality of stents through the coating bath.
8. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the step of applying a coating further comprises:
passing the stents through the coating spray at a first distance from the sprayer, then

passing the stents through the coating spray at a distance from the sprayer greater than the first distance.

9. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the step of applying a coating further comprises:

passing the stents through the coating spray at a first distance from the sprayer, then
passing the stents through the coating spray at a distance from the sprayer smaller than the first distance.

10. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the endless belt is arranged such that after each of the plurality of stents passes through the coating spray at a first distance from the sprayer, the stents pass through the coating spray at least twice at distances from the sprayer greater than the first distance.

11. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the endless belt is arranged such that after each of the plurality of stents passes through the coating spray at a first distance from the sprayer, the stents pass through the coating spray at least twice at distances from the sprayer smaller than the first distance.

12. The method of roll coating stents of claim 5, wherein the step of placing at least one of the plurality of stents on the plurality of stent holders further is performed with an automated stent loader.

13. The method of roll coating stents of claim 12, further comprising the step of: removing the stents from the stent holders with an automated stent unloader.

14. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein
the stent holders are rolling pins,
the rolling pins are sized to permit stent placement over at least a portion of the pins.

15. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the stent holders are rotating bases adapted to receive individual stent handling devices on which at least one stent

is pre-mounted, and wherein the step of placing the stents on the stent holders further comprises:

placing stents pre-mounted on stent handling devices onto the stent holders by engaging the stent handling devices with the rotating bases.

16. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the coating sprayer sprays the stent coating toward the stents from a plurality of directions.

17. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, wherein the coating sprayer rotates around the stents as stent coating is sprayed toward the stents.

18. The method of roll coating stents of claim 6, further comprising the step of : drying the coated stents prior to removal of the coated stents from the stent holders.

19. The method of roll coating stents of claim 18, wherein the drying step includes exposing the coated stents to a coating dryer prior to removal of the coated stents from the stent holders.

20. The method of roll coating stents of claim 18, wherein the conveyer is heated to accelerate coating drying.

21. The method of roll coating stents of claim 18, wherein the coating and drying steps are repeated a plurality of times before the coated stents are removed from the stent holders.